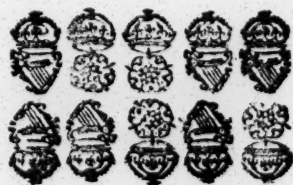


A
DECLARATION
 OF THE
LORD GENERALL
 AND HIS
COUNCEL of OFFICERS;
 Shewing the Grounds and Reasons for
 the dissolution of the late
PARLIAMENT.



L O N D O N,

Printed by *Hen. Hills* and *Tho. Brewster*, Printers to the Army, and
 are to be sold at the sign of *Sir John Old-castles* in *Pye-corner*, and at
 the three Bibles at the West-end of *Pauls* 1653.

*A Declaration of the Lord General and
his Councill of Officers.*

OUR Intention is not to give an account at this time of the grounds, which first moved us to take up armes, and engage our lives and all that was dear unto us, in this cause; nor to mind in this Declaration the various Dispensations through which Divine providence hath led us, or the witnesse the Lord hath borne, and the many signall testimonies of acceptance, which he hath given to the sincere endeavours of his unworthy servants, whilst they were contesting with the many and great difficulties as well in the wars, as other transactions in the three Nations; being necessitated, for the defence of the same cause they first asserted, to have recourse unto extraordinary actions, the same being evident by former Declarations published on that behalf.

After it had pleased God not onely to reduce *Ireland*, and give in *Scotland*, but so marvellously to appear for his People at *Worcester*, that those Nations were reduced to a great degree of peace, & *England* to perfect quiet, and thereby the Parliament had opportunity to give the people the harvest of all their labor, blood, and treasure, and to settle a due liberty both in reference to civil and

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spiritual things, whereunto they were obliged by their duty, their ingagements, as also the great and wonderfull things, which God had wrought for them, it was matter of much grief to the good and wel-affected of the Land, to observe the little progress which was made therein, who thereupon applied to the Army, expecting redresse by their meanes; notwithstanding which the Army being unwilling to meddle with the Civill Authority, in matters so properly appertaining to it, it was agreed that his Excellency & Officers of the Army, which were members of Parliament, should be desired to move the Parliament to proceed vigerously in reforming what was amiss in Government, and to the settling of the Commonwealth, upon a foundation of justice and righteousness, which having done, we hoped that the Parliament would seasonably have answered our expectation: but finding (to our grief) delaies therein, we renewed our desires in an humble Petition to them, which was presented in *August* last, and although, they at that time, signifying their good acceptance thereof, returned us thanks, and referred the particulars thereof to a Committee of the House, yet no considerable effect was produced, nor any such progress made, as might imply their real intentions to accomplish what was petitioned for: but on the contrary, there more and more appeared amongst them an aversion to the things themselves, with much bitterness, and opposition to the people of God, and his spirit acting in them, which grew so prevalent that those persons of honor and integrity amongst them, who had eminently appeared for God and the publick good, both before & throughout this war were rendred of

no further use in Parliament, then by meeting with a corrupt party to give them countenance to carry on their ends, and for effecting the desire they had of perpetuating themselves in the supream Government. For which purpose the said party long opposed, and frequently declared themselves against having a new Representative: and when they saw themselves necessitated to take that Bill into Consideration, they resolved to make use of it to recruite the House with persons of the same spirit and temper, thereby to perpetuate their owne sitting. Which intention divers of the activest amongst them did manifest, labouring to perswade others to a consent therein: And the better to effect this, divers Petitions preparing from severall Counties for the continuance of this Parliament, were encouraged, if not set on foot by many of them.

For obviating these evils, the Officers of the Army obtayned severall meetings with some of the Parliament, to consider what fitting meanes and remedy might be applyed to prevent the same: But such endeavours proving altogether ineffectuall, it became most evident to the Army, as they doubt not it also is to all considering persons, that this Parliament, through the corruption of some, the jealousy of others, the non-attendance and negligence of many, would never answer those ends which God, his People, and the whole Nation expected from them: But that this Cause which the Lord hath so greatly blessed, and bore

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wisdom to, must needs languish under their hands, and by degrees be wholly lost, and the lives, liberties, and comforts of his People delivered into their Enemies hands.

All which being sadly and seriously considered by the honest People of this Nation, as well as by the Army, and wisdom and direction being sought from the Lord, it seemed to be a duty incumbent upon us, who had seen so much of the power and presence of God going along with us, to consider of some more effectually means to secure the Cause, which the good People of this Common-wealth had been so long engaged in, and to establish Righteousness and Peace in these Nations.

And after much debate it was judged necessary, and agreed upon, that the Supream Authority should be by the Parliament devolved upon known persons, men fearing God, and of approved integrity, and the government of the Common-wealth committed unto them for a time, as the most hopeful way to encourage and countenance all Gods People, reform the Law, and administer Justice impartially; hoping thereby the People might forget Monarchy, and understanding their true interest in the Election of successive Parliaments, may have the Government settled upon a true Basis, without hazard to this glorious Cause, or necessitating to keep up Armies for the defence of the same.

And

And being still resolved to use all meanes possible to avoid extraordinary courses, we prevailed with about twenty Members of Parliament, to give us a Conference, with whom we freely and plainly debated the necessity and justnesse of our Proposalls on that behalfe: and did evidence that those, and not the Act under their Consideration, would most probably bring forth something answerable to that Work, the foundation whereof, God himselfe hath layd, and is now carrying on in the World.

The which notwithstanding found no acceptance, but instead thereof, it was offered, that the way was to continue still this present Parliament, as being that from which We might reasonably expect all good things. And this being vehemently insisted upon, did much confirme us in our apprehensions; That not any love to a Representative, but the making use thereof, to recruit, and so to perpetuate themselves, was their ayme.

They being plainly dealt with about this, and told, That neither the Nation, the honest Interest, nor we our selves, would be deluded by such dealings. They did agree to meet againe the next day in the Afternoon for mutuall satisfaction, it being consented to by the Members present, that Endeavours should be used, that nothing in the meantime should be done in Parliament, that might exclude or frustrate the Proposalls before mentioned.

Notwithstanding this, the next morning the Parliament did make more hast then usuall, in carryirg on their said Act, being helped on therein by some of the persons engaged to us the night before, none of them which were then present endeavouring to oppose the same; and being ready to put the maine Question for consummating the said Act, whereby our aforesaid Proposals would have been rendred void, and the way of bringing them into a faire and full Debate in Parliament obstructed.

For preventing whereof, and all the sad and evill consequences, which must upon the grounds aforesaid, have ensued, and whereby at one blow the interest of all honest men, and of this glorious Cause, had beene endangered to be layed in the dust, and these Nations imbroyled in new Troubles, at a time when our Enemies abroad are watching all advantages against us, and some of them actually engaged in War with us; wee have beene necessitated, though with much reluctancy, to put an end to this Parliament; which yet We have don, (we hope) out of an honest heart, preferring this Cause above our names, lives, families, or interests, how dear soever; with cleare intentions, and reall purposes of heart, to call to the Government persons of approved fidelity and honesty: believing, That as none wise will expect to gather Grapes of Thornes, so good men will hope, that if persons so qualified, be chosen, the fruits of a Just and righteous Reformation, so long prayed and wished for, will

will (by the blessing of God) be in due time obtained, to the refreshing of all those good hearts, who have been panting after these things.

Much more might have been said, if it had been our desire to justify ourselves, by aspersing others, and raking into the mis-Government of Affaires; but wee shall conclude with this, That as wee have been led by Necessity and Providence, to act as wee have done, even beyond and above our owne thoughts and desires, so wee shall and do, in that of this great worke which is behind, put our selves wholly upon the Lord for a blessing; professing we looke not to stand one day without his support, much lesse to bring to passe any of the things mentioned, and desired, without his assistance: And therefore do solemnly desire and expect, That all men, as they would not provoke the Lord to their owne destruction, should wait for such issue as he shall bring forth, and to follow their businesse with peaceable spirits; wherein, we promise them protection by his assistance.

And for those who professe their feare and love to the Name of God, that seeing, in a great measure for their sakes, and for righteousness sake, we have taken our lives in our hands, to doe these things, they would be instant with the Lord, day and night on our behalves, that wee may obtaine grace from him. And seeing we have made so often mention of his Name, that we may not doe the least dishonour thereunto: which indeed would be our confusion,

fusion, and a staine to the whole Profession of Godlineesse.

We beseech them also to live in all humility, meeknesse, righteousnesse, and love, one towards another, and towards all men ; that so they may put to silence the ignorance of the foolish, who falsely accuse them ; and to know, that the late great and glorious dispensations, wherein the Lord hath so wonderfully appeared in bringing forth these things, by the travell and blood of his Children, ought to oblige them, so to walk in the wisdom and love of Christ, as may cause others to honour their holy Profession, because they see Christ to be in them of a truth.

Wee doe further purpose before it be long, more particularly to shew the Grounds of our Proceedings, and the Reasons of this late great Action and Change, which in this we have but hinted at.

And We doe lastly Declare, That all Judges, Sheriffs, Justices of Peace, Mayors, Bayliffs, Committees, and Commissioners, and all other Civil Officers, and Publique Ministers, whatsoever, within this Common-wealth, or any parts thereof, doe proceed in their respective

ative Places and Offices, and all persons whatsoever, are to give Obedience to them as fully as when the Parliament was sitting.

Signed in the Name, and by the Appointment of his Excellency the Lord Generall, and his Councell of Officers.

White-Hall, the 22
of April, 1653.

WILLIAM MALYN, Secret.

FINIS.
